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Perceptions of the pre-service teachers about video based classroom discussions

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Abstract

Video based instruction is very popular instructional technology and can be used in different disciplines. According to the different objectives of lessons or nature of the discipline, the integration of the video into lessons is also varying. In some lessons, video can be used not only as an instructional tool for supporting lesson with different activities but also as a discussion tool for facilitating interaction and communication among students, teachers and video films. This study aims to examine the pre-service teachers' perceptions about video based classroom discussions. The participants of this study were thirty five senior class students of the education faculty, from department of Early Childhood Education Program (ECE) at a private university. After eight week video based discussion process, pre-service teachers were posed six open-ended questions to evaluate the effectiveness of the video based discussion method. The qualitative data were analyzed through the content analysis.

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1. Introduction

A case is a carefully-designed narrative embodying issues, concepts, and principles judged to be important for learners' functioning in applied settings. Many educators believed that students become better thinkers, problem solvers, and decision-makers by analyzing and discussing cases. Moreover, case studies provide a useful applied context for problem solving and a bridge from theory to practice (Van den Berg and Visscher-Voerman, 2000; Bruning et al., 2008). Having such advantages, cases also have been used for more than 50 years in teacher education. In this time period, a variety of formats have emerged to present problems or dilemmas in teaching and learning. These formats have included the critical incident, protocols, vignettes, simulations, and more recently, video cases (Tippins, Nichols, and Dana, 1999).

Video cases is very popular instructional tools and can be used in different disciplines such as history education (Weolders, 2007), mathematics education (Derry, Wilsman, and Hackbarth, 2007; Pauli, Reusser, and Grob, 2007), nurse education (Yoo, Son, Kim, and Park, 2009), teacher education (Koc, Peker and Osmanoglu, 2009). According to the different objectives of lessons or nature of the discipline, the integration of the video into lessons is also varying. In some lessons, video can be used not only as an instructional tool for supporting lesson with different

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activities but also as a discussion tool for facilitating interaction and communication among students, teachers and video films.

Today much of the current literature on learning to teach suggests that teachers should ground their skills in a mixture of theory and learning in context. In their research study on this topic Perry and Talley (2001) have gathered recommendations from experts in the effective use of video cases in teacher education programs. According to them, video cases should be used as best practices of the field. Understanding alternative methods is often best accomplished through cases and other in-context experiences such as internships and work in professional development schools.

Koc, Peker and Osmanoglu (2009) explored the potential value of video based case discussions among pre-service and in-service teachers, and the video case teacher as a tool for the professional development of teachers. The results indicated that participant teachers were able to make theory–practice connections by articulating specific frameworks that guided their study. The inclusion of the video case teacher was beneficial for the other teachers in several ways and the case teacher have a great potential to support teacher professional development.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Thirty five senior class students of the education faculty, attending a compulsory undergraduate course, the “Teaching Practice” offered by Early Childhood Education Program (ECE) at a private university participated in the study. All of the students were female except one student.

2.2. The procedure

Teaching Practice course gives a chance for pre-service teachers to practice daily works in application schools. The course has two parts consisting of theoretical and practical issues. The theoretical part, which took part in the faculty with 3 hours per week, requires preparing a lesson plan including classroom environment, instructional material and assessment and evaluation parts. The main method used for the theoretical part was based on video based classroom discussions. The second part, which took place in the application schools with 6 hours per week, include applying the prepared lesson plan, writing a self-assessment report after completing the application period.

The course began with review of the teaching methods and techniques. Then, teacher qualifications and assessment and evaluation in education were discussed in the course. As mentioned above, the video based classroom discussion method was used to improve the existing knowledge both on theoretical and practical parts of profession. Moreover, this method was applied not only for evaluation of the pre-recorded videos according to the principles of teaching and learning but also for the development of critical thinking, problem solving skills and reflective thinking.

The videos used in the classroom discussions were selected according to their richness of poor and strong points of teaching and learning methods. In the theoretical part, the selected videos were presented to the students after the explanation of how to discuss while watching. The instructor posed some tasks to the students before discussions such as to focus on the objectives, activities, instructional materials and classroom management techniques. After eight week video based discussion process, pre-service teachers were given open-ended questions to evaluate the effectiveness of the video based discussion method depending on their perceptions

2.3. Open-ended Questions

At the end of the semester, following six open-ended questions asked to the pre-service teachers.

1. What did you experience in the video based classroom discussion process?
2. Did you face any difficulties during Video Based Classroom Discussion (VBCD) process? If any, how did you manage these problems?

3. Do you want to use other discussion methods in teaching practice lesson? If any, why do you want to use?
4. What do you think about using VBCD method in your future profession (or in other undergraduate lessons)?
5. What do you think about supporting teaching practice lesson with VBCD in terms of the contribution to teacher education?
6. What are your suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the process of VBCD?

2.4. Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed by using content analysis method. First, data were coded inductively and controlled, emerging themes were found, data were coded again according to the new emerged themes, and finally, the results were interpreted (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

3. Results

According to the questions' order, the results are presented below respectively. Frequencies of the statements were written in parentheses.

3.1.1. Experience of VBCD process

Students explained their experiences about VBCD that they developed the self-evaluation ability (7), they had the chance of criticizing (6), they realized the wrong behavior easily (5), they had multi-faced perspective (4), they had the chance to bridge theory and practice (2), their criticisms guided the practice of theories (2) and they knew what to do when they were in conflict (2).

3.1.2. Difficulties faced during VBCD process and possible solutions

Students stated the difficulties they faced during VBCD process that there were audio-visual problems in video cases (5) and seating arrangement problems in the classroom (5), the number of students were too many(2), watching video cases from start to finish (Not focusing only wrong behaviors) caused problems (2), generating similar thoughts were a problem (1). Moreover students suggested possible solutions to these problems that they wanted to watch specific video cases focusing on classroom management and communication (2), to use high quality video cases (1), to change the seating arrangement (1), and friends to try to see different perspectives (1). Differently, 3 students explained that there were no problems.

3.1.3. Preferences about using different discussion methods in teaching practice lesson

Most students preferred VBCD method (8) in teaching practice lesson; secondly students preferred fish bone diagram (1) and debate method as a discussion method in teaching practice lesson.

3.1.4. Thoughts about using VBCD method in future profession

All students explained their positive thoughts about using VBCD method in their future profession or other undergraduate lessons. Students wanted to use VBCD method because VBCD method gave students a chance to observe (7), to generate alternative thoughts (7), to develop of the ability of critical thinking (6), to self-evaluate (6), to find problems and produce solutions (4), to see others' experiences (3) and to practice (2).

3.1.5. Contributions of VBCD to teacher education

Students stated the contributions of VBCD to teacher education that VBCD helps students to criticize in-depth (10), to realize the details of cases in the discussion process (6), to develop the ability of self-evaluation (3), to have multi-faced perspective (1) and to have a chance to bridge theory and practice (1).

3.1.6. Suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the process of VBCD

Students explained their suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the process of VBCD that they suggested to discuss their own videos (4), to discuss in smaller groups (4), to being organized the physical environment of the classroom (3), to being edited the video cases such as cropping unnecessary part of the cases (2), to use VBCD more frequently (2), to write diaries after discussion (2) and to discuss other countries' video cases (1).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aims to examine the pre-service teachers' perceptions about video based case discussions. By using VBCD in the teaching practice lesson in the classroom, students developed the self-evaluation ability, they had the chance of criticize, they realized the wrong behavior easily, they had multi-faced perspective, they had the chance to bridge theory and practice, their criticisms guided the practice of theories and they knew what to do when they were in conflict.

Students stated that they faced some difficulties about quality and length of video cases, seating arrangement, the number of students, and generation of same thoughts. Moreover students suggested possible solutions to these problems.

Most students preferred video-based case discussion method in teaching practice lesson. All students explained their positive thoughts and reasons about using VBCD method in their future profession or other undergraduate lessons. Moreover, students suggested to discuss their own videos, to discuss in smaller groups, to being organized the physical environment of the classroom, to being edited video cases such as cropping unnecessary part of the cases, to use VBCD more frequently, to write diaries after discussion and to discuss other countries' video cases.

Those who want to use video cases for discussion in their lessons should consider some points especially before, during and after the discussions. Before discussions, instructors should organize classroom environment in terms of seating arrangement, form groups consisting of 4-5 students, give students tasks before discussions and choose qualified video films in terms of legibility of audio-visuals. During discussions, instructors should guide students when they generate same thoughts, made students remember the focus of the discussion and made all students share their ideas. After the discussions, instructors should want students to summarize the discussions and to write individual reflection papers.

VBCD method is an effective and recent way of transferring the complex nature of teaching. It develops a framework to discuss the thinking patterns of the pre-service teachers to improve the advanced organizer skills by giving them the opportunity to develop critical and reflective thinking skills. This study is supposed to serve as a guide to the instructors and instructional technologists who want to use video base case discussions in their lessons.

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